UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/50/11
15 November 1995

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 156

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/50/L.6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1 and A/50/L.14)]

50/11. Multilingualism

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2241 B (XXI) of 20 December 1966, 2292 (XXII) of 8 December 1967, 2359 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967, 2479 (XXIII) and 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, 3189 (XXVIII), 3190 (XXVIII) and 3191 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973 and 43/224 D of 21 December 1988,

Recalling also, on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, that the universality of the United Nations and its corollary, multilingualism, entail for each State Member of the Organization, irrespective of the official language in which it expresses itself, the right and the duty to make itself understood and to understand others,

Stressing the need for strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations,

Recalling further that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are both official and working languages of the General Assembly and

its committees and subcommittees, 1/ and of the Security Council, 2/ that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages and English, French and Spanish the working languages of the Economic and Social Council, 3/ and that English and French are the working languages of the Secretariat, 4/

Regretting that unequal use is made in the United Nations of the different official languages and of the working languages of the Secretariat, and desiring that persons recruited by the Organization should have a command of and use at least one of the six official languages in addition to one working language of the Secretariat,

Considering that the translation and interpretation budgets of United Nations bodies should be commensurate with the needs and should not be subject to budgetary constraints, as noted in resolution 42/207 C of 11 December 1987,

Noting that the principle of equality of the official languages is being called into question with increasing frequency by the holding of so-called "low-cost" informal meetings,

Emphasizing the need for the Organization to continue to promote the learning of all the official languages and the working languages of the Secretariat by members of missions accredited to the Organization and by Secretariat staff,

Emphasizing also the importance of providing access for all Governments and all sectors of civil society to the Organization's documentation, archives and data banks in all the official languages,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the strict implementation of the resolutions establishing language arrangements for both the official languages and the working languages of the Secretariat, and invites Member States to do likewise;

2. Recalls that the Secretariat is required, in its relations with Member States, to use the official or working language requested by those States;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that appointment of the staff of the Organization is carried out strictly in accordance with the terms of Article 101 of the Charter and the regulations established by the General Assembly pursuant to that Article and that, upon recruitment, personnel recruited by the different bodies of the Organization have a command

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1/ Rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2/ Rule 41 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

3/ Rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

4/ Resolution 2 (I) of 1 February 1946.

of and use at least one of the working languages of the Secretariat or one of the working languages of another body of the Organization, in the case of staff members who are to work for that body and whose tenure of appointment does not exceed two years, and requests him to ensure that the use of another of the six official languages is duly encouraged and taken into account, particularly when promotions and incremental steps are under consideration, in order to ensure linguistic balance within the Organization;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to ensure, in particular in the recruitment and promotion of Secretariat staff, equality of the working languages of the Secretariat and of their use;

5. Stresses the need to ensure, in particular through the training and recruitment of specialists, that the necessary resources are available to guarantee the proper and timely translation of documents into the different official languages of the United Nations;

6. Recalls the need to ensure the simultaneous distribution of such documents in the official languages;

7. Also stresses the need to ensure adequate human and financial resources for maintaining the teaching, at all levels, of the official languages and the working languages of the Secretariat;

8. Further stresses the importance of ensuring the availability of publications and adequate data banks in the different official languages in the libraries and documentation centres of the various bodies;

9. Urges the delegations of Member States and the Secretariat to endeavour to avoid holding informal meetings without interpretation;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit at its fifty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and particularly on the use of the official languages of the United Nations and the working languages of the Secretariat.

49th plenary meeting
2 November 1995